



2018 Annual Report on the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth

12/19/2018

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Introduction

Governor Rauner created the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth (Children's Cabinet) in February 2016 build a cohesive strategy across state systems to address the wellbeing and success of our young people, who are the future of our state. Seventeen State agencies oversee some aspect of preparing children and teenagers for adulthood. As a result, families that need State assistance must seek that help in a piecemeal fashion. Our inefficient, fragmented system not only wastes money but also falls short of preparing our children and youth for a successful, happy future. The concept behind the Children's Cabinet is that all of the leaders in State government whose agencies interact with children and youth will be in one room, under the leadership of the Governor, to join the forces of their agencies in a common cause for the wellbeing of the people they serve.

Since the Cabinet was created in 2016, it has adopted seven priority projects to improve the health, safety, education, and self-sufficiency of Illinois Youth. These first three inaugural projects were: 1) Decreasing the Childhood Lead Burden; 2) Early Childhood Workforce Development; and 3) Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways. Recently, the Cabinet adopted four additional projects: 1) Building a Statewide Community-based Mentoring Network; 2) Childcare Subsidies and Self-Sufficiency; 3) Multi-system Collaborations for Dually Involved Youth; and 4) Transitional Math and Alternative High School Equivalency. These projects have pulled together teams of multiple state agencies as well as external partners, creating a new level of cohesion throughout the state in order to address major issues Illinois' children face every day.

Executive Order 2016-3: The Creation of the Children's Cabinet

On February 18th, 2016, Governor Rauner issued Executive Order 2016-3 establishing the Children's Cabinet. The Children's Cabinet was created as a nationally recognized model to "drive the State's strategic vision for achieving child and family outcomes and long-term prospects for the state's future workforce."ⁱ It is also expected to promote accountability, increase public awareness, improve efficiency within the State, and develop strategic collaborations among public and private partners on children and family programs.

The Executive Order outlines the following specific duties for the Children's Cabinet:

1. Track the performance of each agency, board, and commission of the state of Illinois responsible for education programs and each public institution of higher education
2. Establish strategic goals for attaining a more cohesive State education services strategy
3. Make funding and policy recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly to improve measurable education outcomes
4. Promote coordination and efficiency among State education agencies, school districts, community colleges, and units of local government

Members of the Children's Cabinet

Executive Order 2016-3 established the following positions to the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth:

- a. The Governor, who will serve as Chairman of the Children's Cabinet;
- b. Lieutenant Governor;
- c. The Deputy Governor;
- d. The Director of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget;
- e. Senior Advisor to the Governor on Education
- f. The Superintendent of the State Board of Education;
- g. The Director of the Department of Children and Family Services;
- h. The Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- i. The Director of the Department of Employment Security
- j. The Director of the Department of Healthcare and Family Services;
- k. The Secretary of the Department of Human Services;
- l. The Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice;
- m. The Director of the Department of Public Health;
- n. The Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development;
- o. The Director of the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission;
- p. The Executive Director of the Board of Higher Education;
- q. The Executive Director of the Community College Board;
- r. The Executive Director of the Student Assistance Commission; and
- s. The President of the Illinois Math and Science Academy

The Cabinet has also added the following members since the issuance of the Executive Order:

- a. Director of the Council on Developmental Disabilities
- b. Secretary Designate, Department of Innovation & Technology
- c. Director of the State Police

Children's Cabinet Meetings

In accordance with the Executive Order and the Open Meeting Act, the Children's Cabinet holds public meetings at least every quarter. The first session took place on March 7, 2017. The Children's Cabinet formed additional subgroups to focus on each goal and project, and these subgroups have been meeting in addition to the full Cabinet meetings. The schedule of full Children's Cabinet Meetings in 2017 are listed below.

The Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth - March Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018

Time: 12:00 – 2:00 PM

Location: Rush University Medical Center, Searle Conference Center – Brainard Room, 1725 W. Harrison (POB Building), Chicago, IL 60612

The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth – June Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 7, 2018

Time: 12:00 – 2:00 PM

Location: MHub, Large Event Space, 965 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60642

The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth – September Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 6, 2018

Time: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Location: Springfield High School, Auditorium, 101 S. Lewis Street, Springfield IL 62704

The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth – December Meeting

Cancelled on account of the late President Bush’s Memorial Service

The Work of the Cabinet

To carry out its duties, the Children’s Cabinet initially focused on developing a thorough vision for children and youth. Within this vision, the Children’s Cabinet created a framework based on current research to help identify the most important indicators of children’s health, safety, education, and the ability to grow into self-sufficient adults. Once complete, the Children’s Cabinet used this framework to identify and adopt three inaugural projects to improve outcomes for children and youth in Illinois in September 2016 and then four additional projects in March of 2018. This work is outlined in the section below. Once the projects were selected, the Cabinet agencies have focused on the work necessary to move these projects forward and move outcomes for children and youth.

Children’s Cabinet Vision

The lack of a cohesive and coherent structure is not unique to Illinois. Over the last 20 years, 17 new states have created versions of Children and Youth Cabinets to promote coordination across state agencies and improve the wellbeing of children and families.ⁱⁱ The Children’s Cabinet, therefore, researched the most successful of these Children’s Cabinets and found a common thread in the goals of all of these bodies – they all focused on improving specific outcomes for children’s health, safety, and education. In creating the Illinois framework, the Children’s Cabinet used these as three of their primary outcome goals and also included one that is unique to Illinois – self-sufficiency by the age of 25.

This work culminated in the adoption of the Children’s Cabinet vision – that all children and youth in Illinois are:

- **Healthy:** have strong physical, emotional, and mental health from pre-natal through age 25
- **Safe:** live in strong communities where they are protected from injury, neglect, and criminal activity
- **Well-Educated:** prepare our children to be engaged citizens with meaningful and rewarding careers
- **Self-Sufficient*:** by age 25, have the ability to sustain themselves even in times of adverse economic conditions economically

The Cabinet created subgroups for each of these goals and tasked the subgroups with reviewing current research on children and youth outcomes, then using this research to develop a set of population-based outcome metrics and key indicators to guide and monitor Cabinet work going forward.

Project Based Approach

The Children’s Cabinet adopted a project-based approach to improving outcomes for children and youth in Illinois. This method allows the Children’s Cabinet to focus their efforts on a few discrete cross-agency projects and move them a mile, rather than spreading across every indicator and moving each one only an inch.

Since the Children’s Cabinet goals and key indicators show that there are many areas we need to address to improve the lives of children and youth in Illinois, the Cabinet created a set of criteria to guide which of these initiatives should be adopted as the inaugural Children’s Cabinet projects. The Cabinet determined that each project must:

- Have a **sustained and measureable impact** on the health, safety, education, and self-sufficiency of Illinois children and youth
- Address a key indicator that **provides the greatest opportunity to improve outcomes** for children and youth
- **Require the ongoing engagement of at least five agencies**, particularly in areas where cross-agency collaboration can be improved
- Be of importance to the health, safety, education, and self-sufficiency of children and youth, but are **not priority programs for any individual agency**

Children’s Cabinet Projects

This year the Cabinet moved the three inaugural projects into their continuity phase, having sufficiently set up systems for operation and advancement without the constant support and oversight of the Cabinet. With these projects running more autonomously, the Cabinet entertained new proposals for projects to be adopted by the Cabinet. Four new proposals were brought to the Cabinet, and the Cabinet voted unanimously to move forward with all of them.

The four new initiatives of the Children’s Cabinet are as follows:

- 1) **Building a Statewide Community-Based Mentoring System** – reduce arrest rates and recidivism for at risk youth and increase neighborhood safety by enabling all youth in Illinois to have access to high-quality mentors
- 2) **Childcare Subsidies and Self-Sufficiency** – a research study to identify the relationship between a family's enrollment in the CCAP program and their employment outcomes.
- 3) **Multi-System Collaboration for Dually Involved Youth** – to reduce recidivism and dually involved youth's dependency on state systems of support, by creating stronger collaborative systems to address the needs that youth identify as most important to their long-term success.
- 4) **Transitional Math and Alternative High School Equivalency** – increase the number of youth who are prepared for college and/or their career by strengthening and broadening transitional math offerings and methods for obtaining an alternative high school credential.

The three projects in their continuity phase are as follows:

- 1) **Decreasing the Childhood Lead Burden** – to decrease childhood exposure to lead in Illinois and through increased lead prevention efforts, increased environmental assessment and lead mitigation efforts, and improved, coordinated, and targeted case management and child health services.
- 2) **Workforce Readiness Through Apprenticeships and Pathways (W.R.A.P.)** –

- 3) to increase the number of youth earning industry-recognized credentials and post-secondary certificates in high-growth, high-demand occupations.
- 4) **Early Childhood Education Workforce Development** –To promote and support a strong pipeline and alignment of career pathways for a diverse, well-qualified early childhood care and education workforce.

More information on each of these projects and their progress is in the following sections

Building a Statewide Mentoring Network

Research shows that children and youth are most successful when they have long-term positive relationship with adults. In fact, just one reliable, caring adult in a child’s life significantly increases the chance that the child will grow up safe, educated, and self-sufficient. These positive relationships act as protective blankets for children, decreasing the likelihood of involvement with the criminal or juvenile justice systems, increasing educational attainment, and increasing positive social connections, all of which create safer neighborhoods. However, many of Illinois’ at-risk-youth live in places where it can be difficult to build positive relationships with safe and reliable adults. **Vision** To increase mentor/mentee relationships that lead to improved safety and educational attainment outcomes for youth across the state through the creation of a statewide community-based mentoring network that partners state agencies and community-based providers that serve children and adolescents.

Project Goals

The project aimed to facilitate the scaling of a professional network of mentoring programs and help develop infrastructure to assist in creating a statewide technical assistance and resource bank comprised of leaders with expertise in evidence based mentoring models and development of mentoring programs.

Project Accomplishments: 2018

Progress

Initially met with David DuBois, Ph.D., who is a professor in the School of Public Health at UIC and is an expert on mentoring from a public health lens. Dr. DuBois helped us identify 5 potential goals that could fit within the framework of our project, including:

- A scan of mentoring programs that currently exist throughout Illinois and analysis of gaps in service
- A Toolkit for organizations providing mentoring programs with recommendations for best practices and proven training techniques
- Information about recruiting – there is a current gap in research and information about effective recruiting strategies, especially in underserved communities
- Screening and recruitment tools that do not exclude, but instead welcome mentors who can be “credible messengers” for at-risk youth

- Bi-directional learning between community and mentoring organizations and state systems that interact with at-risk youth, including teaching state workers how to form healthy, appropriate relationships with youth in their care.

Impact

Several mentor initiatives were created which will serve potentially hundreds of youth in the project's target population.

Accomplishments

- The Project Team performed an initial review of research and data regarding mentoring generally and programs in Illinois which will provide the necessary background and context for work on this project.
- The Project Team drafted a toolkit and website prototype. The next phase involved establishment and support of mentor initiatives. The team also worked to create partnerships and gather information for infrastructure/training/funding resources to highlight on the website.
- The team conducted a scan of existing mentor programs
- Designed a toolkit which provides information for community programs and individual community members to navigate state agencies.
- The team also collaborated to draft a Website template and a prototype of the website was created with the assistance of DoIT.
- To date, several mentor initiatives have already begun through IDJJ. Further, following a youth summit held by the DCFS Dually Involved Project where youth participants overwhelmingly expressed the need for mentors.
- DJJ and DCFS plan to take steps to collaborate in future mentor initiatives.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice
- *Additional State Agencies/Offices:* Illinois Community College Board; Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; Illinois Department of Human Services; Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology; Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- *External Partners:* Mentor Illinois; University of Illinois at Chicago

Childcare Subsidies and Self-Sufficiency

This project supports a vision where all available program supports for childcare and employment are comprehensively understood and allocated intelligently for best outcomes for children and families

Project Goals

In order to accomplish the vision laid out by the project, the project team established the following goals:

- Establish Illinois Administrative Data Facility (IADRF) for analysis
- Answer key research questions:
 - How has receiving CCAP subsidies impacted the self-sufficiency of parents?
 - How does the effect of CCAP on employment vary by income?
 - How have CCAP subsidies impacted the receipt of SNAP and TANF amongst CCAP families?
 - How do different settings of childcare and the continuity of care relate to self-sufficiency?

Project Accomplishments: 2018

Progress

The State Procurement Officer has required us to go through an extensive procurement process to justify a sole source arrangement with a consortium of universities (University of Chicago, University of Maryland and NYU) to provide the I-ADRF to the State of Illinois.

In the meantime, data on CCAP Recipients from 2013 has been successfully linked with UI wage data for preliminary analysis. From a sample group of 5,881 CCAP parents in 2013, we began preliminary analysis on their employment outcomes from 2011 – 2016

Accomplishments

- Sole Source Justification was submitted to the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer on October 1
- IDES staff met with staff from the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer in the beginning of November
- Revised Sole Source Justification was submitted to the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer on November 19
- The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) for General Services approved the IDES sole source request with New York University to establish the Illinois-Administrative Data Research Facility. The Procurement hearing on the I-ADRF is scheduled for December 20, 2018 but will be cancelled if no interested party submits written comments/requests by December 14, 2018.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Illinois Department of Human Services
- *Additional State Agencies/Offices:* Illinois Department of Employment Security
- *External Partners:* Chapin Hall (University of Chicago); New York University; University of Maryland

Multi-System Collaboration for Dually Involved Youth

In Child Welfare, one of the most vulnerable and high-risk populations of young people are those involved with both Child Welfare and Criminal Justice Systems, known as Dually Involved Youth. Youth in care that become involved in the criminal justice system are generally 12-21-year-olds and are at greater risk of sequentially becoming stuck in state care. Ultimately this youth will age out of Child Welfare care but have an increased likelihood of becoming involved with or dependent on another state system, i.e., Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services, and/ or Department of Health and Family Services. Currently in Illinois, this population's trajectory is on a path to become further disenfranchised from education, employment, family, and society. In addition, juvenile arrest research indicates that youth with multiple arrests without intervention are more likely to be victims of community violence.

This population needs more focused support from each of the systems in which the youth is involved. Unfortunately, multi-system youth have proved difficult to track across multiple systems, and a lack of continuity of services and data sharing has exacerbated the issue. However, the ultimate problem is that these youths are less likely to stay home with their family, return to their relatives or placed in any type of home like setting.

This project aims to bring those multiple systems together to leverage the voices of the highest risk youth and use those voices as the driving force behind solutions to the state's most challenging problems with the dually involved population. As a result, higher risk youth will experience fewer barriers to fair opportunities for success, less contact with law enforcement and improved permanency outcomes.

Project Goals

The overarching goal of this project was to integrate the youth voice from the very beginning and keep them engaged and involved in each critical step toward creating solutions. We hope to create better systems that offer tailored programs that support dually involved youth. By engaging youth in this process, we hope to build systems that are not only considered best practice, but also useful, effective, desired, and designed by the very youth that will be enrolled in each program. Additionally, this project aims to engage state directors from all relevant agencies to ensure buy-in and integrated involvement in designing and implementing solutions to the problems that the youth define. The project was developed, implemented and executed in three phases. Phase 1: Gather Youth Voice, Phase 2: Develop Problem Statements and Phase 3: Youth Solution Summit.

The intention of Phase 1 was to gather youth voice through a variety of tactics: hand delivered surveys, online surveys, and in-person focus groups. Youth were involved with the development of the survey, structure and facilitation of focus groups. Youth were also involved in the distribution and completion of the survey. When developing the survey, we took care to ensure that the questions allowed for both quantitative and qualitative feedback. Additionally, we aimed to make the survey youth friendly, accessible, and easy to navigate. The goal of collecting youth voice at this stage was to better understand why youth involved in child welfare and criminal justice struggle to successfully transition out the system and sustain self-sufficiency.

Phase 2 was an analysis of all the survey data results collected by hand, online, and focus groups. The survey was distributed via Survey Monkey, and thus we were able to analyze most of the quantitative data from the survey through Survey Monkey's analytic tools. Meanwhile, the project team created coding guidelines to analyze the qualitative feedback received. The goal of analyzing the information was to distill the information gathered into problem statements or common themes. Within the problem statement or themes, we aimed to identify what other systems would need to be involved for further collaborate with. For example, if there are consistent statements regarding difficulties of re-entry youth enrolling into schools. DCFS, ISBE, and DJJ/ DOC would collaborate with youth to design a solution to address the problem identified. Hearing the voices will help us see where we can improve collaboration. This phase took 1-2 months.

Phase 3 engaged youth in a fun and challenging solution design session that was facilitated by Illinois Institute of Technology Design School. The goal of this phase was to bring youth together with state agency staff to come up with solutions to the problem statements that arose from Phase 1 and Phase 2. Youth earned prizes, stipends and community service certificates for designing solutions to address problems they have identified. The solution summit took place in the Governor's Mansion on October 26, 2018 and state agency directors and executive leadership from DJJ, DHS, DCFS, ISBE, ICCB, DCEO, and ISAC engaged in the solution design sessions with up to 60 dually involved youth

Project Accomplishments: 2018

The project began with DCFS recruiting its own staff, and staff from other partner agencies to form a strong project team. Knowing that the goal was to capture the youth voice concerning the systematic problems in Illinois that they experience, planning for youth recruitment and data collection was the first step. For data collection, an electronic survey was written and administered. 246 youth throughout the state completed a survey and/ or engaged in a focus groups. Fourteen focus groups were held in various settings to capture the youth voice and their experience in Illinois Systems. Data from all surveys and focus groups was coded according to common themes in order to extract the most salient problems that youth shared. From this data, we identified 5 specific problem statements that arose as the most common problems facing youth in care. Once the problem statements were written, they were reviewed by youth to ensure accuracy and agreement. As previously mentioned, the next step in the project was to plan an event for youth to brainstorm and create solution ideas and meet with Illinois agency Directors to share their ideas and assess the feasibility of each solution. The Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) volunteered to help run the event using an innovative design curriculum to facilitate the youth solution design process. The event was a huge success and many great solution ideas emerged in addition to state agency directors offering their input and commitment to implementing the new solution ideas.

Project Impact

The project inspired other state agencies to incorporate youth voice as a practice when developing policy and programs that impact young people. Hundreds of youth had the opportunity to voice both their concerns with the systems which influence their lives each day, barriers created by these systems, and worked with hundreds of others to create solutions. State Agency partners remain motivated and

committed to implementing youth designed solutions. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is currently in the process of developing a process for current and former youth in care be a member of the DCFS Office of Learning and Development. The Office of Learning and Development is the venue where training curriculums are developed and implemented for foster parents, caseworkers and DCFS staff. The impact of this project is ongoing and will continue to be realized in 2019.

Accomplishments to date:

Phase I

1. Identified population and project team
2. Identified current population of dually involved youth
3. Survey and focus group agenda was designed by youth in DCFS and DJJ care
4. Administer survey to more than the number of youth targeted
5. 14 focus groups were conducted by staff volunteers from various private and public agencies

Phase II

6. ISBE, Chapin Hall and DCFS Staff coded and analyzed over 2,500 items of data
7. Drafted theme statement
8. Met with youth to revise theme statements
9. Met with youth to transpose theme statements to problem statements
10. Presented final problem statements to State Agency Directors that provide emerging adult programs

Phase III

11. Secured a partnership with the Illinois Institute of Technology Innovation Design School to facilitate solution design sessions between state agency directors and dually involved youth.
12. Successfully and safely coordinated transportation for 55 youth from all over the state to participate in a day and half Solution Summit with IIT and Directors of DCFS, DJJ, DHS, ISBE, ISAC and ICCB.
13. Concluded summit with several solutions presented by youth to the Directors. Most of the Directors committed to supporting and exploring at least 1 of the 7 solutions.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- *Additional State Agencies/Offices:* Governor's Office, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Health and Human Services, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- *External Partners:* Allendale Association, Alternatives School Network, Be Strong Families, Center for Youth and Family Solutions, Children's Home Association of IL, ChildServ, Cunningham, Illinois Institute of Technology, Indian Oaks, Lakeside Community, Lawrence Hall,

Lutheran Child and Family Services, Lydia Home, MYSI, Neurorestorative, Onarga, One Hope United, Spero, UCAN, Webster Cantrell, Youth Advisory Board, Zam's Hope Community Resource Center

Transitional Math and Alternative High School Equivalency

In Illinois, there is currently a 50% remediation rates for first time, full-time freshmen coming out of High School and 1.1 million Illinoisans lack a high school diploma. This makes it difficult for many citizens to obtain a high quality post-secondary credential that enables them to be successful in the job market.

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act established a new statewide system for transitional math instruction to help reduce the need for remediation for students matriculating to the community college. The use of transitional math courses will:

- **Reduce remediation rates** and **bridge the gap of the fourth year of math** for students who often opt out of math in their senior year, increasing their chances of needing remedial coursework.
- **Guarantee placement** at any Illinois community college upon successful completion.

On January 2017, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) approved the High School Equivalency (HSE) Alternative Methods of Credentialing (AMC) recommendations from the AMC Taskforce. The ICCB approved the awarding of a High School Equivalency Certification for the following alternative methods:

- High School Equivalency Certificate Based on High School or HSE Credit
- High School Equivalency Certificate Based on Post-Secondary or HSE Credit
- High School Equivalency Certificate Based on Foreign Diploma or HSE Credit

The Illinois Community College Board felt that these two initiatives were of top priority for ensuring both in and out of school populations had the opportunity to smooth their transition into post-secondary opportunities and support the state in reaching our 60% of the population holding a high quality degree or credential by the year 2025.

Project Goals

In order to move Illinois towards our vision, the project team established the following goals for each of the populations they are targeting:

In School Youth

- Reduction of remediation: Right math for the path
- Shorter time to certificate or degree in higher education
- Reduce barriers to career and technical education and transfer to postsecondary opportunities
- Cost savings for students

Out of School Youth

- Reduce the number of individuals without a high school equivalency
- Provide an accelerated pathway to enter college, training and / or employment
- Fast-track to an industry recognized credential

Project Accomplishments: 2018

- **Competencies and Policies:** Finalized for use in 2018.
- **Portability Panel:** Convened to ensure statewide acceptance of TM courses.
- **Course Supports:** Free sample units will be available by June 2019. Work began with Illinois Virtual School in fall 2018 to develop online versions of the courses Two of the three pathways are on pace to be available online for the 2019-2020 school year; the third pathway will be available online in the 2020-2021 school year.
- **Professional Development (PD):** A professional development plan is underway with significant PD delivered.
- **Communication:** A comprehensive communication plan ensures timely information for all stakeholders
- **Implementation:** Support is provided to all public high schools that do not opt out of transitional math. The approach draws upon the organization of the work through the community colleges.
 - Key Dates and Status
 - June 30, 2019: Final implementation plan due
 - 2019 -2020 school year: Formal adoption or opt out by school districts finalized.
 - June 30, 2022: ISBE and ICCB issue an implementation update report.
- **Eligibility Requirements Set:** Individuals are eligible to apply for a transcript review and evaluation given they meet the following requirements:
 - Candidates have met at least 75 percent (13.5 credit hours) of the minimum high school graduation requirements of 18 credits through previous high school education.
 - Candidates applying to complete their high school equivalency through this method must meet the following age requirements:
 - Candidate must be at least 18.5 years of age and must be a third quarter senior (12th grade) in high school, or
 - Candidate must be at least 17 years of age* and their high school class must have already graduated.
 - Candidates cannot be currently enrolled, or required to be enrolled, in a high-school setting when applying for this option.
 - Candidates cannot apply for this option if they have already completed a high school diploma or high school equivalency.
 - Candidates must pay a fee of \$20.00 for the evaluation of transcripts for any of the three alternative methods listed above. This fee will cover the costs associated with transcript evaluation under any of the three methods of credentialing. This fee does not include the cost of adult education/HSE preparation classes, postsecondary or high school courses; acquiring high school or postsecondary institution transcripts, translation service fees; and other fees associated with HSE testing including the issuance of a HSE Certificate or any HSE official or unofficial transcripts.
- **Implementation:** Effective January 1, 2019, the Illinois Community College Board will roll out the three alternative methods of credentialing for Illinois High School Equivalency.
- **Communication and Professional Development:**
 - In preparation for implementation, the ICCB staff held several meetings with the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) Association in 2017-2018 to review the policy and guidelines.
 - The ICCB has also developed and held training in November and December 2018 for Regional Superintendents and staff.

- All information will be on the ICCB website: www.iccb.org.
- Individuals without a high school diploma with an interest in Alternative Methods of Credentialing, and who meets the requirements as listed above should contact the ICCB or contact the Regional Superintendent of Schools Office in their area for more information.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Illinois Community College Board
- *Other State Agencies/Offices:* Illinois State Board of Education; Illinois Board of Higher Education
- *External Partners:* Regional Offices of Education; Community Colleges; High Schools; Northern Illinois University P20 Center and Education Systems Center

Decreasing the Childhood Lead Burden

Lead poisoning is one of the most prevalent, yet preventable environmental health hazards that can affect children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Exposure to lead in childhood has been linked to developmental delays, short and long-term health problems, and academic underachievement. Children exposed to elevated lead levels tend to suffer from life-long complications that affect their ability to think, learn, or behave.

The burden of Illinois childhood lead poisoning remains one of the highest in the nation. Illinois law requires the reporting of all blood lead tests to Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Of the approximately 229,000 children tested in 2017, more than 7,000 had blood lead levels at or above the public health intervention level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This places Illinois among the top three states with the highest lead burden.

The Children's Cabinet project team, led by IDPH, has investigated sustainable methods to decrease childhood exposure to lead in Illinois, including increased prevention efforts targeting lead poisoning, increased environmental assessment and lead mitigation efforts, and improved, coordinated, and focused case management and child health services.

Project Goals

Children may be exposed to lead in many ways, especially in their homes. Lead can be present in paint, dust, imported consumer products, water, soil, or air. In Illinois, the primary source of lead poisoning is deteriorating lead-based paint, which is found in many houses and buildings that were built before the residential lead paint ban of 1978. An estimated 2 million of the 5.2 million housing units in Illinois have the presence of lead-based paint. Furthermore, children are most likely to ingest lead from dust generated by raising and lowering windows painted with lead paint, and in Illinois, there are an estimated 755,000 housing units with windowsill dust lead hazards

As children ingest lead, the level of lead in their blood becomes elevated, which can only be identified through blood testing. The current action level for blood lead requiring public health intervention in Illinois is 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), however, IDPH is in the process of lowering this value to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ to be consistent with the Federal lead reference guideline. This means that when a child's blood lead level reaches 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, they are eligible for case management and environmental

investigation services to decrease their exposure to lead and, thus, their blood level. These children are monitored closely until their blood lead level decreases and remains below the action level. It is important to note that the neurologic damage done by lead may be permanent, so decreasing blood lead levels prevents further damage, but it may not be able to “undo” damage caused while the child had elevated blood lead levels.

The Children’s Cabinet project team continues, therefore, to investigate sustainable methods to improve each stage of this process. Since research has shown that lead exposure is the most detrimental at young ages, the team will primarily target children and youth in Illinois who are six years of age or younger, one year longer than the national target age.

The goal of this project is to reduce the number of Illinois children six years of age and younger who have an elevated blood lead level of 5 µg/dL or greater. Project focus areas include:

- Improved Identification and Response: Increase identification and service delivery to children in Illinois with an elevated blood lead level by: 1) Promoting blood lead testing and 2) Improving clinical case management and enhancing environmental risk assessment response.
- Ensuring Safe Homes: Improve assessment and mitigation of environmental lead hazards in Illinois homes, focusing on pre-1978 housing stock and lead in water.
- Data-Driven Decisions: Improve lead data management and sharing to more efficiently target lead poisoning prevention services and improve rates of lead testing in children 6 years of age and younger.
- Connecting to Social Services: Ensure linkages to social service providers (e.g., home visiting) for children and pregnant women identified as at risk for exposure to lead or having an elevated blood lead level.
- Prevention Education: Improve lead poisoning prevention education and outreach to healthcare providers, child health services organizations, home visiting services, schools and nonprofit community organizations.

Project Accomplishments: 2017

Progress

The Reducing Childhood Lead Burden project began with a convening of all identified stakeholders at a half-day brain-storming session in Springfield and Chicago in November, 2016. All lead poisoning prevention ideas and strategies were discussed and categorized around the five project focus areas:

- Improved Identification and Response;
- Ensuring safe Homes;
- Data-Driven Decisions;
- Connecting to Social Services; and
- Prevention Education.

All strategies were captured in a comprehensive project plan that identified key stakeholders, tasks towards meeting strategy objectives, performance metrics and key performance indicators, and time lines for assignments and tasks. Project team members were then provided an opportunity to join one or more workgroups that were developed around the 5 project focus areas. Monthly project calls were implemented to discuss project strategies, assign tasks and provide interactive dialogue with all

project team members. Weekly project team calls were also initiated at the beginning of the project to keep the expanding project team up-to-date as primary strategies and tasks were identified.

Project challenges have included making sufficient time for state partners to take leadership roles in workgroups. While all team members were happy to help, it was more challenging to assign leadership responsibilities for workgroups to individuals in different agencies. Improvement with project delegation occurred when IDPH staff became more organized with tasks and assigning responsibilities to specific individuals requesting they coordinate completion. For future projects, it may be helpful to identify primary team leads in each participating agency who can identify and coordinate all agency resources.

As the project has continued, communication with the broad spectrum of team members has proven challenging, especially as IDPH has focused on primary objectives including amending the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Code, developing and implementing an updated lead education strategy including targeting maternal health care providers, and implementing a new state-wide, web-based data management system. IDPH has focused on successes that could be achieved with existing resources while also leveraging new resources to support lowering the blood lead action limit.

Project Impact:

The Reducing Childhood Lead Burden project has revitalized lead poisoning prevention efforts in Illinois that have seen a significant decrease in resources the past decade. The Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Act [410 ILCS 45], passed by the Illinois General Assembly, authorized the IDPH Office of Health Protection, Division of Environmental Health to create the Lead Program to promulgate, administer, and enforce the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Code (77 IL. Admin Code 845). IDPH, as well as approved local health departments, known as delegate agencies, administer and enforce the Act and Code. In fiscal year 2018, IDPH had grant agreements with 89 delegate agencies to provide case management care for lead-poisoned children in 92 of 102 counties. In the 10 counties with no delegate agency agreements, IDPH provided case management services. Additionally, 22 of the delegate agencies also had grant agreements to provide environmental investigation services covering 19 counties. In 2018, IDPH was responsible for environmental investigations for lead-poisoned children in 83 counties.

IDPH has continued to develop and enhance key collaborations with several state agencies and external partners to reduce the childhood lead burden in the State. Project activities the past year have resulted in both internal operational improvements and policy implementation within several State agencies and have encouraged:

- reassessment and strengthening of several collaborative efforts as well as evaluating opportunities to develop and implement new agency work flows to enhance data sharing and communication;
- more efficient leveraging of state government resources and assets including staff and technology; and
- enhanced lead poisoning assessment and response activities through improved communication, and policy development and implementation.

Promulgation of the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Code will formally adopt the federal blood lead reference guideline is anticipated to be completed in December 2018. This significant policy shift that will be codified in law will require the Department and its Local Health Department delegates to initiate case management and environmental investigation activities for all children with a blood lead

level of $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. While current resources are not adequate to conduct environmental investigations for all children with a blood lead level of $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, environmental responses will be prioritized to include all children with a blood lead level of $\geq 10\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ until additional resources can be made available.

Accomplishments to date:

- Adoption of the Federal Lead Reference Guidelines - IDPH Lead Program has worked to amend the Lead Poisoning Prevention Code to formally adopt the federal blood lead reference guideline of $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ for case management and environmental investigations. The code is on the December 11, 2018 JCAR agenda.
- Analysis of Targeted vs Universal Blood Level Testing Models - The Urban Labs at the University of Chicago has built a model to predict, with reasonable accuracy, the likelihood that a given child will have an elevated blood lead level (EBLL) at $\geq 10\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ and used this model to estimate how many EBLL cases were not detected for the 2013 and 2014 birth cohorts. Preliminary results indicate that approximately 21% of all EBLL cases in Illinois go undetected under current practices. Their preliminary findings suggest that focusing resources on the current, targeted test model to increase testing rates of children in high-risk zip codes could ensure all but one-third of these additional cases are identified. IDPH will continue to utilize the current risk-based model to target at-risk populations in Illinois to most efficiently use limited Lead Program resources.
- Work continues on updates to the IGA between IDPH, HFS, and DHS to include additional childhood blood lead and Medicaid data that will enhance IDPH Lead Program surveillance and identification of children currently not being tested for lead poisoning.
- Evidence-Based Home Visiting and Early Intervention Collaboration - IDPH Lead Program Staff participated in several Serving Families Together: Home-visiting, Early Intervention & Child Welfare Cross Trainings that included specific modules and promoted coordinating services for children. The Lead Program Team provided education and materials at a resource table at three of the events.
- IDPH Lead Program Educational Strategic Plan - The IDPH Lead Program shared plans for a comprehensive lead education strategic plan with the Lead Project work groups. The Lead Project work group is working towards implementation of a collaborative lead education strategy that will consolidate, update, and re-tool existing resources as well as develop new educational materials to better target high-risk populations. Documents currently in final review include: Childhood Lead Risk Questionnaire, Blood Lead Testing Recommendations, a poster targeting lead poisoning prevention in pregnant women, a poster developed targeting lead poisoning prevention at WIC clinics, and a series of magnets with targeted lead education messages. IDPH has also begun development of a series of short webinars highlighting specific lead poisoning prevention topics. The first webinar is available on the IDPH public website and provides an overview of lead poisoning prevention activities in Illinois. Additional webinars are under development and will be added to the website in the coming months.

- Maternal and Child Environmental Health (MCEH) Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN) - An Illinois team has been assembled to support and improve coordinated systems of care to address the needs of maternal, infant, and child populations that are at risk for or experience exposure to lead. The team includes maternal and child health care providers, state and local public health and environmental health specialists, and a parent representative. The mission is to develop a plan to reduce lead-related morbidity in infant and toddlers by developing policies, procedures and resources for maternal health care providers and pregnant mothers that target increased identification, management, and education.
- HHLPSS Data System - Implementation of the statewide Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Surveillance System (HHLPSS) for all blood lead data collected in Illinois has recently been completed. This free application, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a web-based data management system that will enable more streamlined data submission, management and reporting as well as utilization of data analyses tools to more efficiently evaluate Illinois blood lead data.
- The Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention continues to pursue creating automatic eligibility for children with an elevated blood lead level of 5 µg/dL for EI services and is working to determine the array of services for these families.
- Implementation of PA -99-0922 (SB550) Lead in Water Testing in schools including:
 - Collaboration with Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and community water suppliers continues as additional information has been developed and posted on the IDPH public website in response to PA 99-0922;
 - IDPH continues to collaborate with DCFS on protocols for lead-in-water testing of licensed daycares and has provided draft guidance on sample collection procedures as well as mitigation of lead in water sources in home daycares;
 - IDPH and DCFS have also collaborated with lead experts from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) who have conducted a pilot study in 4 daycare centers in the Chicago area to evaluate a new sampling technology that detects lead in water. EDF has funded Elevate Energy to execute work in 4 day care centers in Chicago to conduct water testing and mitigation of lead hazards including replacement of plumbing fixtures thought to contain lead. Other lead hazards in the daycares were also mitigated as part of the pilot study.
- CLEAR Win 2.0 – with the implementation of P.A. 100-461, the Comprehensive Lead Education, Reduction, and Window Replacement Program (CLEAR Win) has transitioned from a pilot project to an IDPH program through amending the CLEAR Win Act (410 ILCS 43/). IDPH has begun developing administrative rules and intergovernmental agreements with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Housing Development Authority to mitigate lead hazards in single-family residences or renter-occupied properties with up to 8 units.
- Improved Lead Abatement and Mitigation Compliance – The Illinois Lead Program has increased its enforcement to ensure that lead abatement and mitigation work in regulated facilities does not result in new exposures to lead in children, their families, or lead workers. Through collaboration with local health department partners, the US EPA and municipal housing authorities, IDPH has reallocated resources to work with industry contractors to ensure State and Federal regulations are being followed during lead abatement and mitigation activities.

- Evidence-Based Home Visiting and Early Intervention Collaboration - Home visiting is one of the key services in addition to Early Intervention (EI) that young children exposed to lead should be referred to in order to mitigate the developmental delays that can occur as a result of lead exposure, particularly if the delay has not yet been displayed or is not sufficient to qualify the child for EI services. Coordination with the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, Ounce of Prevention Fund, DHS, and Local Health Departments continues to identify opportunities for training and collaboration with Home Visiting and Early Intervention services, and Lead Program Delegates. A pilot project to include lead training for Early Intervention as well as Home Visiting entities and to provide an opportunity to establish relationships with Lead Program delegates is being planned for early 2018.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Department of Public Health
- *Additional State Agencies/Offices:* Department of Children and Family Services; Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; Department of Healthcare and Family Services; Department of Human Services; Department of Innovation and Technology; Governor’s Office on Early Childhood Development; Illinois Emergency Management Agency; Illinois Attorney General; Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Illinois Housing Development Authority; Illinois Math and Science Academy; Illinois State Board of Education;
- *External Partners:* CDFS; Certified Local Health Departments; Elevate Energy; Illinois Action for Children, Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Illinois Early Learning Council; Illinois Realtor Association, Legal Council for Health Justice; Loyola University; Lurie Children’s Hospital; Ounce of Prevention Fund; United States Environmental Protection Agency; University of Chicago Urban Labs; University of Illinois; US Housing and Urban Development

Early Childhood Workforce Development

Decades of research have indicated that the first five years of life are a critical stage of development that forms the foundation for a child’s health, happiness, growth, and learning. The adults who provide care and education for young children are an integral part of children’s growth and development.

The tens of thousands of early care and education professionals who share the objective of caring for and educating young children when they are not with their parents do so in a variety of programs and settings funded through multiple sources and subject to multiple sets of operating regulations. Ultimately, all children in these settings must transition into kindergarten or first grade. However, despite these shared objectives, the professionals across this field are not acknowledged or supported as a cohesive workforce. The expectations and requirements for their preparation and ongoing development are inconsistent, in some cases have not kept pace with child development science, and are not reflected in rates of compensation. Further, Illinois is facing a shortage of early care and education professionals, and those in the field often find themselves insufficiently supported or without stable employment opportunities to allow them to provide the care children need.

For these reasons, many Illinois children with high needs do not receive quality early care and education services from an educated and qualified workforce, reducing the likelihood that they will be ready for success in school and in life. The Early Childhood Workforce Development project supports a vision in which all Illinois children have access to high quality early care and education services delivered by a qualified, valued, and supported workforce.

Project Goals

1. **Build a pipeline to attract and retain qualified, diverse caregivers.** This work focuses on entry points into the profession, which can take place anywhere along the career development pathway and into settings that may rely on varying funding streams or regulatory requirements.
2. **Provide pathways to create career opportunity and promote movement.** This work focuses on smoothing and streamlining the transitions along the career pathway, whether through the Gateways Credential system or into higher education and licensure and endorsements.
3. **Enhance cross-system data collection, usage, and analytic capacity.** Development and execution of targeted strategies that support the field comprehensively rely on coordination and linkage across disparate data sources. This work focuses on performance measurement across the pipeline and pathways strategies as well as analysis of the field's size, qualifications, employment settings, participation in professional development, and demographics.

Project Accomplishments: 2018

The Early Childhood Workforce Development project elevates, builds upon, and extends existing efforts in Illinois and nationally to improve outcomes for children through development of the early childhood workforce.

The project began in 2016, following the 2015 release of the National Academies' comprehensive report *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. In 2016 and 2017, the project created a project plan and project team and began initial implementation of the project plan (as detailed in the 2016 and 2017 Children's Cabinet Annual Reports).

In 2018, the project transitioned into a continuity phase and more closely aligned its project plan with the work of Illinois' Innovation to Incubation work, a project of the National Academies led by the University of Illinois at Chicago whose purpose was to create a state follow up to *Transforming the Workforce*. In the continuity phase, the project conducted work on the following strategies:

- Expand access to ECE Credential Level 2 coursework for high schoolers through dual credit and dual enrollment and continuing support for attainment of an ECE Credential Level 1.
- Review Gateways ECE Credentials to explore the possibility of incorporating their attainment as an additional pathway to meet the DCFS licensing rules and, based on conclusions, introduce language to amend licensing standards.
- Strengthen the pathway to a Professional Educator License with endorsements through strategies including bridging the Gateways ECE Credentials and the Professional Educator License, building endorsements for non-licensed teachers, and developing provider supports.

- Develop and disseminate messaging that encourages students in institutions of higher education to enter the field.
- Conduct analysis and produce findings that show returns to the field for financial supports such as the Education Reimbursement Initiative and various cohort models.
- Research and identify best practices for improving compensation adequacy and parity.
- Build upon existing information systems that collect and provide data to inform workforce development efforts.

In October 2018, the Innovation to Incubation team published *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce: A Call to Action for the State of Illinois*. This report included guiding principles and recommendations for early childhood workforce development in Illinois and forms the backbone of statewide early childhood workforce development strategy. This report will be used to guide future work within the Early Childhood Workforce Development project.

There are multiple spaces in which discussions on early childhood workforce development are taking place in Illinois. These include the Early Learning Council's Quality Committee, the Professional Development Advisory Committee's Financial Supports, Higher Education, Qualifications and Credentials, and Workforce Development and Pathways Committees, and several more informal groups. National and state level publications, such as those previously mentioned from the National Academies, the National Academies' *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*, and NAEYC's ongoing *Power to the Profession* work, provide frameworks for workforce development efforts that are largely, but not always, aligned. Through ongoing collaboration and communication with these groups in Illinois and engagement in the report development process, the Early Childhood Workforce Development project has worked to more closely align these efforts, limit duplication of effort, and create synergy.

One of the greatest challenges encountered by the project, in spite of the broad array of stakeholders involved in early childhood workforce development in Illinois, has been capacity constraints. Greater human capacity and financial resources are necessary to implement the strategies proposed in *A Call to Action for the State of Illinois* and mirrored in the Early Childhood Workforce Development project strategies. This capacity and resources is needed both within Cabinet member agencies supporting the project and within external stakeholder organizations providing expertise, technical assistance, and collaborative support across the multiple groups working on the issue outlined above.

Project Impact

The Early Childhood Workforce Development project has selected metrics to measure performance and impact across the field. Indicators of progress include binary benchmarks for completion of deliverables as well as measurable metrics of the outputs of strategy activity. Several of these metrics are being collected comprehensively for the first time by the project, helping to paint a holistic picture of the needs of early childhood educators regardless of program or funding stream across Illinois.

For instance, the number of high schools offering Gateways ECE Credential Level 1 coursework continues to grow, from 47 in 2014 to 92 high schools in 2018 serving over 3,550 students. These students receive a Gateways ECE Credential Level 1 upon completion of coursework and are prepared to either enter the workforce as a license exempt home provider or pursue further studies to advance in

the field. To this end, the project has begun efforts to track the increasing number of high schools and postsecondary institutions offering dual credit or dual enrollment coursework for the ECE Gateways Credential Level 2.

With regards to deliverables, the project has published, submitted for review, or provided support on a series of recommendation documents. These include recommendations submitted to the Department of Children and Family Services regarding incorporation of Gateways Credentials into the DCFS Licensing Standards.

Measuring impact on additional metrics, including the total number of early childhood educators in Illinois' early care and education system and their demographics, qualifications, and rates of compensation, and the children receiving services from those educators, presents greater challenges and will require continued cross-agency coordination and collaboration. In addition, Illinois enters its second year of KIDS assessment implementation, it is too soon to see any measurable impact on kindergarten readiness as a result of project workforce development efforts. However, as project systems changes are implemented, the project will track movement across these inputs (a qualified and supported workforce) and outcomes (kindergarten readiness and beyond).

Accomplishments

- February 2018: Integrated preliminary recommendations from draft of *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce: A Call to Action for the State of Illinois* into project strategies.
- March 2018: Completed preliminary analysis of two Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funded initiatives: the Education Reimbursement Initiative, which provided reimbursements for charges associated with postsecondary education to nearly 250 early care and education professionals; and the Cohort Initiative, which supported statewide educational cohorts for over 180 teachers to obtain endorsements.
- April 2018: Received grant award from the National Governors Association to pursue early childhood educator compensation reform. This work will be based on the 2016 Early Learning Council and Professional Development Advisory Council report *Achieving Compensation Parity: Illinois Goal for the Field of Early Childhood Care and Education*.
- April 2018: Supported completion of *Voices from the Front Lines of Early Learning: 2017 Illinois Early Childhood Workforce Survey Report*, an interim report from the Innovation to Incubation team.
- July 2018: Developed a template designed to guide local replication of education advancement initiatives, such as education reimbursements or cohorts, and an accompanying funders guide designed to support local financing of such initiatives.
- August 2018: Supported development of Senate Bills 1829 and 3536 (Public Acts 100-0645 and 100-0822, respectively), expanding the pipeline of school-based early childhood educators and strengthening the pathway to career advancement for community-based early childhood educators. PA 100-0645 expands the number of educators eligible to teach in Preschool for All Classrooms; for the next five years, educators with a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5 will be eligible to teach in these classrooms while working toward their Professional Educator License.

PA 100-0822 ensures that educators in alternative licensure programs teaching in community-based PFA settings can receive appropriate supports during their education and training without having to leave their current role.

- October 2018: Submitted to the Department of Children and Family Services' Child Day Care Licensing Advisory Council recommendations for incorporating Gateways Credentials into Licensing Standards for Day Care Homes, Day Care Centers, and Group Day Care Homes. These recommendations were then submitted to the DCFS Office of Child and Family Policy for review.
- November 2018: Surveyed Illinois high schools offering dual credit or dual enrollment coursework to better understand the availability of early childhood course offerings leading to the Gateways ECE Credential Level 1 or 2.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
- *Other State Agencies/Offices:* Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE)
- *External Partners:* City Colleges of Chicago, City of Chicago, Harold Washington College, Heartland Community College, Illinois Action for Children, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Latino Policy Forum, Lewis University, Lincoln Land Community College, National Louis University, Northern Illinois University, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Southeastern Illinois College, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Illinois Head Start Association.

The project also leverages the Illinois Early Learning Council as an advisory team, via the Quality Committee, to ensure alignment with broader early learning efforts and to provide information and consultation to the working team. The project also frequently confers with other agency advisory councils, including the Professional Development Advisory Council.

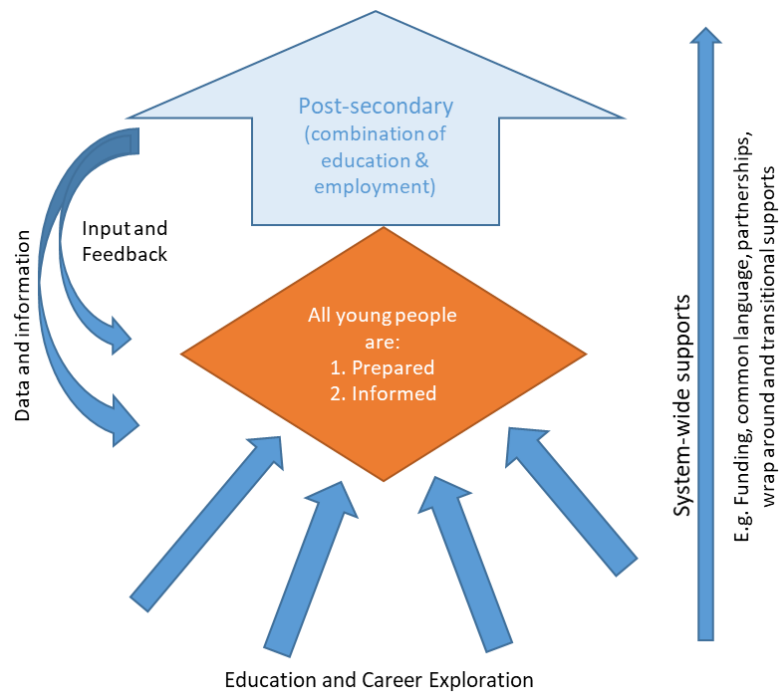
Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships & Pathways (WRAP)

Introduction

Youth unemployment in Illinois in 2016 was 14.2%, far more than double that of the entire labor force at 5.9%. Further, too many of the high school seniors in Illinois' public and private high schools (of which there were 160,000 in 2015) are not aware of the vast number of career options available to them, nor are they prepared adequately to fill the jobs they want or the jobs that are needed in the economy. Moreover, in 2015, Illinois had an estimated 184,000 youth between 18 and 24 who were out of work and out of school. The under-preparation, and subsequent disconnection, of young Illinoisans creates additional costs to society through unemployment insurance, healthcare subsidies, and other public benefit supports.

The Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways (WRAP) Project is working towards the vision that *all Illinois young people reach adulthood having completed academic and workforce readiness*

programs that prepare them for college and work, while equipping them with the information they need to choose the best career pathway for themselves.



Project Goals

The WRAP project team has worked to align several college and career readiness initiatives into the career pathways framework and continues to work toward building a cohesive system, with specific goals to link initiatives and support the WRAP vision:

1. Develop state infrastructure to support career pathways and associated work-based learning opportunities
2. Define expectations for "prepared for college and career"
3. Identification and standardization of career pathway information
4. Develop quality metrics to identify promising practices and ensure continuous improvement
5. Work with IWIB to engage businesses in career pathways
6. Inform and engage Illinoisans in career pathways and associated work-based learning opportunities

Progress

Over the course of 2017, the WRAP project evolved from a focus on the Apprenticeship Plus strategy to its broader interagency vision of a cohesive system of college and career pathways that can serve all youth in Illinois by empowering them with the experiences and knowledge they need to succeed. The essential systems-building work articulated in the six identified goals are also supplemented to WRAP

engagement with the following high-priority strategic planning initiatives across the state as building blocks to create a cohesive career readiness system and building toward its vision throughout 2018:

- *Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan*: A result of federal legislation and led by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the ESSA State plan outlines ISBE's goals to implement a holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated system of support that prepares each and every student for academic excellence and postsecondary success. Most relevant to this project is the College and Career Readiness Indicator set forth by the plan, which the U.S. Department of Education highlighted as an example of a unique and progressive indicator.
- *Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act*: The PWR Act, signed into law by the Governor in July 2016, specifies implementation strategies to better align the transition from high school into college and careers. The Act includes a framework for Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE), College and Career Pathway Endorsements, Transitional Math Instruction, and pilots of competency-based high school graduation requirements.
- *Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan*: A result of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and led by the four core WIOA partners (DCEO, DHS, ICCB, and IDES), the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan provides a vision of the state's integration of workforce, education and economic development policy.
- *ICCB Workforce Education Strategic Plan*: Led by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Workforce Education Strategic Plan outlines the goals and objectives for four priority areas that will achieve alignment of the community college system and the state's workforce development system with economic development directions and workforce needs, thereby creating a talent pipeline that fuels economic growth and creates career pathways for all Illinoisans.
- *Scaling Apprenticeship through Funding Opportunities*: Both DCEO and ICCB have spent a great deal of 2018 leading work to scale apprenticeship opportunities across the state through providing targeted grant opportunities to address a variety of systemic needs. These funding opportunities have included youth career pathways, funding for regional and sectoral intermediary structures, and scaling apprenticeships in the context of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the community college context.

These strategic building blocks have been coupled with maintaining connections to other key State bodies such as the Illinois P-20 Council and its College and Career Readiness (CCR) Committee, as well as the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) through three key committees: Career Pathways for Target Populations, Integrated Business Services, and Apprenticeship Committees. Connecting with both the P-20 Council and the IWIB has resulted in increased alignment and awareness of key strategies being implemented across the primary entities working to serve youth as they progress into college and career.

The largest challenge the WRAP team faced was the ability to capture and reflect on data to assess direct project impact. The systems-level nature of the WRAP efforts often precludes drawing a direct connection between an individual WRAP goal or deliverable to metrics directly measuring the success of youth. In addition, changing leadership within the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) resulted in a limited capacity for drawing down and analyzing data pertaining to the KPIs of the

Children's Cabinet as a whole. As such, while the WRAP team reviewed some data pertaining to issues such as overall unemployment trends, the team was unable to develop a robust dashboard reflecting all the KPIs of interest. In 2019 and beyond, the WRAP team hopes to develop the necessary relationships and structures in collaboration with new staff at DoIT.

As its organizing structure, the WRAP team held an extended in-person meeting each month over the course of 2018 to work towards its collective goals and identify areas of alignment in strategies such as those outlined at the beginning of this section. Represented at these meetings were predominantly policy-level staff, though the group also included many Deputy Director-level staff as well. In that way, the WRAP team was able to have substantive discussions and working sessions in which policy and programmatic decisions could be made. While at times institutional priorities and philosophical frameworks across WRAP agencies at times produced tensions for the WRAP team to navigate, overall the regular, dedicated time provided for a great deal of cross-agency learning and reduced duplication of efforts, all in service of increased system clarity and efficiency. Holding a space for connection each month has produced robust discussion that can help us communicate better with constituencies – ultimately helping our system to be more navigable for youth across Illinois.

Further, the WRAP structure enabled agencies and initiatives to be connected and leveraged to serve multiple ends in a more efficient fashion. For instance, the employer needs efforts of WRAP were directly connected to the Integrated Business Services team of the IWIB in such a way that deeply informed the approach for engaging employers in scaling work-based learning via the National Governors Association (NGA) Work-Based Learning Policy Academy and the Governor's Summit on Work-Based Learning. Working toward this unified purpose provided a framework for employer engagement in service of youth that would not involve duplicative requests of employers' time and resources. Over time, the collective understanding and efforts illuminated areas where some of the deliverables identified at the outset of 2018 were either no longer going to produce added value in service of higher cross-agency function or youth outcomes. In some cases, this meant pivoting away from deliverables intended to be newly developed resources and turning to pulling existing programmatic and research efforts that could simply be highlighted as useful for a variety of practitioners and agency stakeholders.

The WRAP team also acknowledges that, at times, full alignment is not always possible, and may produce some duplication or confusion in the field. An example of this is in apprenticeship funding, where at times multiple funding streams flowing to the same communities in service of apprenticeships can cause some fragmentation in communication and, ultimately, service delivery to youth. However, the power of the WRAP team comes from creating and maintaining a deliberate space in which agencies, who have several shared objectives across a variety of programs and funding streams, can identify such challenges and enhance alignment to clarify of the system as a whole. In the absence of such a space, progress toward these shared objectives could be slowed, and efforts that seek to reach those objectives may end up working toward somewhat cross-purposes.

Project Impact & Accomplishments

Enhanced Information & Communications

Career Pathways Dictionary

In the State of Illinois, the public and private sector alike are conducting a broad number of efforts pertaining to education, workforce development, and economic development through a lens of career pathways. Common to all this work is a shared philosophy regarding college and career pathways, with the aim of enabling Illinois residents to progressively build toward college and career success through aligned education, training, and employment opportunities over their lifetimes. A wide range of education and training programs and initiatives administered by a variety of private, state, and local entities fall within this system of career pathways. It is critical that they use aligned terminology and language to ensure they are building programs and pathways effectively. For that reason, Illinois approved a statewide definition of career pathways this year and used that definition as a launching pad for a larger suite of definitions, now contained within the new Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary.

Over the course of 2017 and into early 2018, the unified Career Pathways definition adopted by WRAP was formally approved by the following boards: the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois P-20 Council, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). Building off that definition, the WRAP team developed associated definitions for the component parts of a Career Pathways system. The Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary includes terms that fit the following criteria: 1) They pertain to—or deeply impact—multiple programs across state agencies; and 2) they apply to programming with funding from multiple federal agencies (e.g., programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). This dictionary will be updated as needed and new terms will be added, should they meet these criteria. The additional definitions align with the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act, as well as the Illinois plans for ESSA, WIOA, and Perkins.

While agreement on these definitions is an accomplishment in and of itself that has already been celebrated by a number of external partners, the WRAP Steering Committee and its member agencies have also begun the process to identify key strategies needed to implement these definitions, such as alignment of funding opportunities, reporting requirements, stakeholder engagement, and more to ensure that these definitions truly become the way of working on career pathways within Illinois.

As of the writing of this report, the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary has been shared with the following state and external entities (links included for where the Dictionary has been posted publicly):

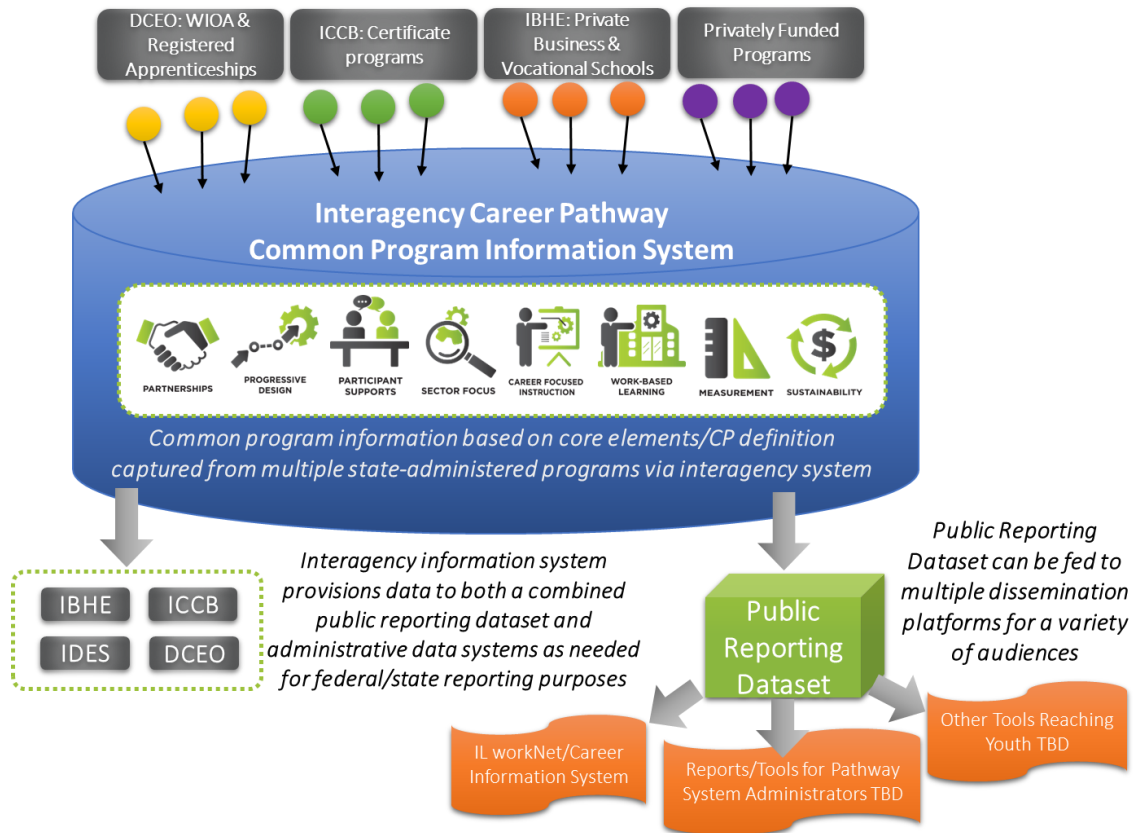
State Agencies & Boards	External Partners <i>(including, but not limited to those below)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governor’s Office Education Team• Work Learn Grow Digital Platform• DCEO• ISAC• ISBE• ICCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Department of Labor Region 5 Youth Liaison• Education Commission of the States• Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)• JFF Pathways to Prosperity Network• National Governors Association

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IBHE • IDES • IDHS • IL P-20 Council • IWIB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois School Counselors Association • Illinois Workforce Partnership • Illinois Apprenticeship Collaborative • College & Career Access, Persistence, & Success Funders & Nonprofits • Chicago Jobs Council • Chicago Workforce Funders Alliance • Grand Victoria Foundation • Joyce Foundation • Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University • Women Employed • Young Invincibles
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Interagency Career Pathways Common Program Information

The WRAP team is leading cross-agency collaboration on a systemic approach for collecting more comprehensive and higher quality information on career pathway programs across multiple agency funding streams. The cross-agency technical team driving this work is comprised of representation from the core education and training agencies, as well as representation from the Governor’s Office education team and IDHS. At its core, this effort is to align data collection and program approval processes to the unified Career Pathways definition to support mandated reporting for WIOA and Eligible Training Providers, as well as enhance systemic research capabilities and improve information available to potential program participants. In the future, the system will also serve as the basis for connecting data in support of participant outcomes data reporting as required by WIOA. At the time of this report, there is agreement across the relevant agencies to collect an identified set of data, and the technical scoping and build-out will continue through early 2019. The WRAP vision for the system (adopted March 2018) is illustrated in the following diagram:

Career Pathway Programs report through common information system



National Governors Association Work-Based Learning Policy Academy & Work Learn Grow IL

In April, members of the WRAP team submitted the initial round of deliverables to NGA, including data on existing work-based learning programs and funding streams, as well as a work-based learning action plan. Through the process of developing these deliverables, the team identified key assets and gaps in both funding streams and program models being implemented across Illinois at a high level, which will continue to inform the work of the WRAP team as it develops its data and programmatic strategies.

Over the course of June and July 2018, the WRAP team supported the development of a brand in support of Illinois' efforts to scale work-based learning. *Work Learn Grow: Pathways to the Jobs of Illinois' Future* will serve as a brand for work included in Illinois' participation in the NGA Work-Based Learning Policy Academy, as well as other WRAP-related efforts including the Career Pathways Dictionary. As part of this branding effort, the logo and color scheme that follow were designed on behalf of and approved by the WRAP team and additional NGA team members.



In conjunction with both the Work Learn Grow brand and the Summit, the WRAP Committee supported the development of a digital platform housed Summit details and now serve as a platform for the greater career pathways work in the state, including the Career Pathways Dictionary described below. The platform serves as a hub of resources for a variety of stakeholders: “learners” of all ages, employers, and education/training providers. Organizations can also join the “Committed Coalition” on the site. The Digital Platform has already garnered well over 250 hits since its launch, and can be found at this link: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/wlg/Pages/default.aspx>

Career Outcomes Tool

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), with support from Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), publicly released its beta version of the Career Outcomes Tool in May 2018. This tool provides workforce outcomes for postsecondary graduates by 2- and 4-year college and program. ISAC conducted usability test at six high schools with a total of 60 students. IDES formally launched ilcollege2career.com at the September Children’s Cabinet meeting.



The web tool is available in both English and Spanish and empowers youth and their guides to make more informed postsecondary education and career choices. IDES and ISAC have also established a partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop an informational tool learning pathways and workforce outcomes for Illinois high school seniors between 2003-2016. This effort will link federal financial aid applications, postsecondary enrollment and completion, high school characteristics, and employment/earnings records. Since its release in September 2018, the College2 Career tool has recorded more than 5,100 unique weekly users. The top programs of user interest have been Business, Health Professions, and Engineering. Users most often view information on career earnings and student debt.

In collaboration with IDES and other WRAP agencies, ISAC has been driving the promotion of the College2Career tool. Through ISAC’s Fall Professional Development Series, 274 community college advisors and leaders were reached. At least 1,000 high school counselors were reached over the course

of eight Illinois State Articulation Conferences across the state. The tool was also highlighted at over 700 events throughout College Changes Everything Month, and there have been a number of radio and Facebook live promotions. ISAC continues to promote the tool through webinar and in-person convenings, as well as through a virtual [tutorial](#) that has been shared as a resource extensively.

Small Business Resources

In March, leadership from WRAP agencies received a request from the Governor for resources to assist him as he encounters small businesses around the state who need but struggle to find qualified talent, particularly in skilled positions. In response, the WRAP team collaborated to create three key resources that have already been shared with businesses around the state:

1. *Small Business Workforce Talking Points*: a “script” for the Governor to share what his administration has been doing to help small business address this issue, as well as direct them to some strategies and resources to help address their needs.
2. *Resources for Illinois Small Businesses*: a one-page handout that can be provided immediately to small businesses expressing interest in this issue and includes direct links for both short- and long-term workforce pipeline resources.
3. *Illinois workNet Hiring Services Page*: a landing page (illinoisworknet.com/hiringservices) that will help direct small businesses to the various resources available to them.

Increased Awareness of and Engagement in Apprenticeships & Work-Based Learning

Funding to Scale Apprenticeships

WIOA Youth Career Pathways

DCEO’s Office of Employment and Training (OET) received 23 Applications requesting a total of \$13,893,401.75 in grant funds to serve 2,044 youth participants. OET recommended funding seven applicants with a total of \$1,841,492 in grant funds to serve 255 youth participants with quality programming in alignment with the adopted Career Pathways definition.

Apprenticeship Expansion NOFO

DCEO launched a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Apprenticeship Expansion in July 2018. This NOFO seeks to support expanding Registered Apprenticeships in Illinois by providing funding to eligible organizations serving as Regional Apprenticeship Navigators or Intermediaries, which will work to build capacity with organizations and systems to scale registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship models. DCEO recommended funding for 10 grantees for a total of roughly \$2.5 million, and as a result anticipates serving 150 apprentices and engaging 360 new businesses.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Improvement Grant

In FY2018, the ICCB released the CTE Improvement Grant to support the improvement and innovation of CTE programming throughout the Illinois community college system. One of the focus areas colleges could select was work-based learning, within which colleges could choose to expend funds to create, scale, or support apprenticeship programming. Four colleges (Harold Washington, Lake Land, Lincoln

Trail, and McHenry County) received \$50,000 each to support apprenticeship programming over an 18-month period. Additionally, the ICCB has contracted with the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the U of I to conduct research on the challenges and barriers that prevent community colleges from engaging in apprenticeship program. While competitive grants have not yet been released for FY2019, the ICCB is exploring a similar grant in collaboration with other agency stakeholders.

Scaling Up Apprenticeships Grant

The ICCB, on behalf of a consortium of community colleges, applied for the Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector Based Strategies Grant Opportunity funded by the USDOL. The grant aims to accelerate the expansion of apprenticeships to new industry sectors reliant on H-1B visas, while also promoting the large-scale expansion of apprenticeships across the nation. The ICCB has chosen Information Technology as its sector focus and if awarded plans to fund 10 community colleges to develop or scale IT apprenticeship programming and related activities. The ICCB applied for \$4 million to support 1,600 apprentices across the 10 community colleges statewide.

Governor's Summit on Work-Based Learning

On October 1st, the WRAP team successfully executed a Governor's Summit on Work-Based Learning at Illinois Central College in East Peoria. The Summit had over 230 attendees, including representation across the business and education sectors. The goal of the summit was to foster the creation of a cohesive, business-led, education-driven work-based learning system that supports the needs of its workforce, businesses,

and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state's economy. To that end, the plurality of the attendees represented the business sector, and 41 unique attendees from across business, education, and workforce from around the State presented throughout plenary and breakout sessions. Activities throughout the day included: informative panels and plenary sessions, tactical breakout sessions, a work-based learning fair where participants engaged directly with other employers and providers and closing remarks from the Governor.

In advance of the Summit, nearly 200 registrants indicated that they were eager to obtain tools to help them support and scale work-based learning, as well as network with their colleagues representing other sectors and areas of the state. Surveys distributed to attendees gathered a wealth of positive feedback, with the majority of attendees noting that the Summit met or exceeded these expectations, gave them the opportunity to build their network around supporting work-based learning, provided them with useful resources, and prepared them to take steps in supporting the scaling of work-based learning opportunities in their region. At least 17 of attendees indicated that they were new to work-based learning, and many more indicated that they were only peripherally engaged in work-based learning. Over 90 different organizations joined a "Committed Coalition" in support of scaling work-based learning opportunities across Illinois, and the plurality of respondents reported that as a result of the Summit, they knew what resources were available to them in support of taking their next steps.



National Apprenticeship Week Proclamations

The alignment and emphasis on career pathways strategies through WRAP and its participating agencies has fostered growing interest in work-based learning strategies such as apprenticeships. During National Apprenticeship Week in November, these efforts culminated in formal proclamations by the Governor and at least communities and entities. These proclamations indicate a growing commitment to scaling and strengthening apprenticeship models throughout Illinois in service of preparing young people for college and career.

Project Team

- *Lead Agency:* Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
- *Other State Agencies/Offices:* Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE); Illinois Community College Board (ICCB); Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES); Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC); Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE); Governor's Office Education Team; Department of Human Services (DHS); Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (IGAC); Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)
- *External Partners:* Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University (EdSystems); Women Employed; Young Invincibles

Governor's Cabinet Youth Commission

The Cabinet voted to move forward with establishing a Youth Commission in March 2018 to ensure the Cabinet is taking youth voice into account when making policy decisions. The Commission will provide direction to the Cabinet by elevating concerns of youth in the State of Illinois to top level policy makers. The Commission will report on key issues regarding youth and provide guidance and feedback on the direction the Cabinet should take for planning and implementation of key initiatives. This will enable youth affected by Cabinet initiatives to have a direct line of communication with executive officials making high level decisions.

Goals

The Youth Commission will make sure the voice of the Cabinet's target population, children and youth, is being elevated to key policy makers in the state of Illinois, while educating youth on issues related to civic engagement and policy areas of interest. To meet these goals, the Cabinet has established the following learning objectives:

- The Youth Commission is aware of and understands the issue areas and projects that the Governor's Cabinet work on, as well as provides feedback on those projects.
- The Youth Commission feels like their work and recommendations are valuable to the Governor's Cabinet and impactful overall.
- The Youth Commission understands the decision-making processes, both within the Governor's Cabinet and other systems that may be relevant to the Youth Commission's work.
- The Youth Commission understands how to amplify their voice and advocate for issues important to them.

- The Youth Commission will have an understanding of the services that the Governor’s Cabinet agencies provide, and will give feedback on those services.

Accomplishments: 2018

Since its formation in March 2018, the Commission has made some great progress in establishing processes and operational functions, selecting membership, and has begun to meet. Below is a detailed timeline of the Commission’s development over the past year.

- **March 2018:** The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth voted to formally adopt a Youth Commission as an advisory body
- **April – June 2018:** The Governor’s Office worked with each of the agencies on the Cabinet to identify a youth representative to sit on the Commission
- **June 2018:** Young Invincibles and the Governor’s Office created a Memorandum of Understanding for Young Invincibles to partner with the Governor’s Office to provide staffing and strategic direction for the Commission.
- **August 2018:** Young Invincibles and the Governor’s Office established the Learning Objectives and Expected Deliverables for the Youth Commission.
- **September 2018:** The Youth Commission met for the first time on September 15, 2018.
- **December 2018:** The Youth Commission held their second meeting and decided to move forward on tackling the issue of public awareness around apprenticeships and workforce readiness opportunities.

Project Team

- *Lead Partners:* Governor’s Office and Young Invincibles
- *Other State Agencies/Offices:* Department of Child and Family Services, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Illinois State Board of Education
- *External Partners:* Children’s Home and Aid

Conclusion

The Children’s Cabinet has made significant progress in the past year. The body continued to complete a significant amount of work to ensure that all children and youth in Illinois are healthy, safe, well-educated, and, by age 25, self-sufficient in good-paying, high-quality careers. This has been accomplished through the ongoing work of the project teams and the development of a new body to ensure youth voice is being elevated to the Cabinet Officials. By continuing to work collaboratively on these projects, the Children’s Cabinet will make a measurable and sustained impact on the health, safety, education, and self-sufficiency of Illinois children and youth.

ⁱ Executive Order 2016-3

ⁱⁱ NGA Guide to Governor’s Children’s Cabinets, 2004.